

House Concurrent Resolution No. 22

97TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ROORDA.

0530L.011

1 **WHEREAS**, a feature distinguishing police from all other groups in society is their
2 authority to apply lethal force when circumstances call for it; and
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4 **WHEREAS**, police may be called on to use force when making an arrest, breaking up
5 an altercation, dispersing an unruly crowd, or performing a myriad of other official activities
6 during their daily routines; and
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8 **WHEREAS**, the force may range from relatively minor physical contact to get a person's
9 attention, such as pushing or a firm grip on an arm, to deadly force by use of a firearm; and
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11 **WHEREAS**, despite the protests and controversy they provoke, there is no
12 comprehensive data on police shootings across the country; and
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14 **WHEREAS**, while the FBI collects vast amounts of information on crime nationwide,
15 missing from this clearinghouse are statistics on where, how often, and under what circumstances
16 police use deadly force; and
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18 **WHEREAS**, no agency or organization comprehensively tracks the most significant act
19 police can do in the line of duty - the taking of a life by use of a firearm; and
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21 **WHEREAS**, agencies and organizations from the United States Justice Department to
22 the International Association of Police Chiefs to local and state police agencies have guidelines
23 and policies on use of force, but seldom is that use of force quantified and analyzed for trends;
24 and
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26 **WHEREAS**, the only standardized national database on police shootings is the FBI's
27 Uniform Crime Statistics Justifiable Homicide table, which is based on voluntary reporting by
28 police departments and does not include police shootings ruled unjustified or "bad shoots"; and
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31 **WHEREAS**, despite widespread public interest and a provision in the Violent Crime
32 Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 requiring the United States Attorney General to
33 collect data on police shootings and to publish an annual report from the data, statistics on police

34 shootings and use of nondeadly force continue to be piecemeal because the 17,000 individual
35 police departments are not required to report any data collected; and

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37 **WHEREAS**, while the United States Department of Justice has issued several reports
38 regarding the use of police force, including the 1996 national Data Collection of Police Use of
39 Force and the 1999 Use of Force by Police Overview of National and Local Data, no national
40 database has been established in the nearly twenty years since the enactment of federal laws on
41 the collection and reporting of data regarding police shootings; and

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43 **WHEREAS**, in 1999, the United States Justice Department promised to follow through
44 on a Congressional mandate requiring the FBI to collect data on police shootings, but without
45 a mandate for a national database on police shootings and mandatory reporting by every police
46 department, no comprehensive statistics can be compiled; and

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48 **WHEREAS**, in January 2012, the St. Louis Post Dispatch reported that between 2006
49 and 2010, St. Louis Metropolitan police fired their weapons far more frequently, per 1,000
50 crimes, than officers in 16 other big cities. Since "there is no national database on police
51 shootings, [there is] no way to measure conclusively the indicators that officers in [St. Louis] fire
52 their weapons more often than cops in other cities. A national database, correlated with data on
53 criminal populations, would be immensely useful."; and

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55 **WHEREAS**, on December 8, 2012, the St. Louis Post Dispatch ran an editorial praising
56 a new program by the University of Missouri-St. Louis criminologist David Klinger that will
57 track and analyze St. Louis police-involved shootings. This new program follows a study
58 Klinger authored on the same topic finding that the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department
59 had improved the way it investigates police shootings, but that "there is significant room for
60 more improvement, particularly in the area of public accountability"; and

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62 **WHEREAS**, the absence of a reporting mandate for police shootings and a national
63 database creates an appearance of protecting police from scrutiny; and

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65 **WHEREAS**, while comprehensive data each year about police officers who were killed
66 and assaulted in the line of duty is collected, a greater effort needs to be made to collect data on
67 how often and the circumstances in which police use force and violence against American
68 citizens to obtain a more accurate measure of the relationship between police and the
69 communities they serve; and

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71 **WHEREAS**, unless data on the police officers killed and assaulted in the line of duty as
72 well as the data on police shootings are collected and maintained in a national database, the net
73 result may be a system that highlights citizen violation against police officers while failing to
74 take into account the effect of police shootings of our citizens:

76 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the House of
77 Representatives of the Ninety-seventh General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate
78 concurring therein, hereby strongly urge the United States Congress to establish a national
79 database on police shootings and require police shooting data to be submitted by every police
80 department in the United States; and

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82 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of
83 Representatives be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution for each
84 member of the Missouri Congressional delegation.

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